



From the Desk of Walker Watson
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Train! Train! Train!

Many organizations proudly proclaim that their people are their most important asset. While such platitudes sound good, it is instructive to compare how organizations install some of their capital equipment assets with the installation of their critical human assets. The latter is generally given little attention. While personnel briefings and facility tours can be helpful, they rarely fill the common need for training. Few professionals are adequately prepared to use all the tools and resources they are given, to understand the policies, procedures, protocols and services they need, to effectively use (or even know) the organizations entire work processes, to appreciate the subtleties of the entire organization they work in, or to plan and track their own work. Without such training, the necessary learning is gained through trial and error. This not only wastes time and money; it also often involves a lot of error.

Training is expensive, but not nearly as expensive as not training. While the kind of training depends on an organization needs, the key is to start by figuring out what training the people need. These needs must be reviewed with management and a training plan is developed. Finally, for the key courses, attendance must be required. If the courses are optional, few of the busy people will be able to go, and they are the ones who most need it. In sum, training must be planned, funded, scheduled, and required.